

LETTUCE AND ROMAINE HARVESTING MACHINE AND METHOD

ABSTRACT

5 A produce harvesting apparatus of the invention includes a conveyor system
having conveyor belt driven over rollers by a drive element. The belt includes
cushioned produce holders suitable for maintaining produce products in a desired
orientation on the belt during operation. The apparatus includes a coring station
suitable for coring harvested lettuce. The apparatus includes a loading station
10 wherein the cored lettuce is loaded onto the cushioned produce holders and carried to
an application station where shelf life extending materials are applied to the cut
portions of the lettuce. The processed lettuce then proceeds to an unloading station
where it is removed from the conveyor belt. Other inventive aspects include the
conveyor belt having cushioned produce holders and the coring station as well as
15 methods of implementing the disclosed devices.